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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/810,919	03/16/2001	Ronald E. Pelrine	58255-8028.US00	7145

7590 10/22/2003
PERKINS COIE LLP
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EXAMINER

SINES, BRIAN J

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1743

DATE MAILED: 10/22/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/810,919	PELRINE ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Brian J. Sines	1743	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 August 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4,6-17,36-45,47-51,66-70,75-78 and 80-83 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 66-70 and 75-78 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4,6-17,36-45,47-51 and 80-83 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1 – 4, 6 – 17, 36 – 45, 47 – 51 and 80 – 83 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Pethig *et al.* (U.S. Pat. No. 5,795,457 A). Regarding claims 1 – 3, 36, 37, 40 – 43 and 80 – 83, Pethig *et al.* teach an apparatus comprising: a plurality of substrates (2, 11 & 12) comprising workplace stations (treatment cells or chambers) for performing various manipulations or reactions using a plurality of microparticles (4 & 9); a plurality of driving structures (electrodes 1 & electrical connectors 3); and controllers (field generators 1 & 2) operatively-linked to the drive elements. Pethig *et al.* teach that the apparatus may be employed to manipulate the particles into any desired positions relative to each other. Pethig *et al.* further teach that the particles may be removed separately from the chamber or treatment cell by drawing off the particle suspending fluid through perforations or openings located near the electrodes (see col. 3, lines 64 – 67 & col. 4, lines 1 – 67; figures 2, 5C & 8). Regarding claims 4, 17 and 45, Pethig *et al.* teach the incorporation of biasing control elements (electrodes 6 & 7) (see col. 4, lines 14 – 41; figure 2).

Regarding claims 6 – 16, 38, 39, 47 – 51 and 80 – 83, it should be noted that these claims are directed to an apparatus. Therefore, it is the structural limitations of the apparatus, as recited in the claims, which are considered in determining the patentability of the apparatus.

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These claims recite various process or use limitations and are accorded no patentable weight to an apparatus. For example, these claims recite how the apparatus is to be operated, such as in chemical synthesis, diagnostic or screening applications, or what is intended to be used with the apparatus, such as specific chemical or wash reagents, which do not impart any positively recited structural limitations to define the structure of the apparatus being claimed over that of the prior art. Process limitations do not add patentability to a structure, which is not distinguished from the prior art. A recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim. See *In re Casey*, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967); and *In re Otto*, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963). The Courts have held that it is well settled that the recitation of a new intended use, for an old product, does not make a claim to that old product patentable. See *In re Schreiber*, 128 F.3d 1473, 1477, 44 USPQ2d 1429, 1431 (Fed. Cir. 1997). The Courts have held that the claiming of a new use, new function or unknown property, which is inherently present in the prior art, does not necessarily make the claim patentable. See *In re Best*, 562 F.2d 1252, 1254, 195 USPQ 430, 433 (CCPA 1977) (see MPEP § 2112). The Courts have held that apparatus claims must be structurally distinguishable from the prior art in terms of structure, not function. See *In re Danley*, 120 USPQ 528, 531 (CCPA 1959); and *Hewlett-Packard Co. V. Bausch and Lomb, Inc.*, 15 USPQ2d 1525, 1528 (Fed. Cir. 1990). The Courts have held that the manner of operating an apparatus does not differentiate an apparatus claim from the prior art, if the prior art apparatus teaches all of the structural limitations of the claim. See *Ex Parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1647 (BPAI 1987) (see MPEP § 2114).

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 66 – 70 and 75 – 78 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Pethig *et al.*, Batchelder and Witt *et al.* teach a variety of methods and devices for performing chemical manipulations utilizing electrical phenomena. The cited prior art do not teach or fairly suggest an apparatus for exposing a magnetic microparticle to a plurality of liquids, wherein the apparatus comprises: a diamagnetic substrate; a plurality of stations, each station comprising a chamber for holding a selected liquid, wherein the chamber has a chamber opening forming a gas/liquid interface; a driving structure having a set of drive elements for manipulating the magnetic microparticles within the apparatus; and a controller operatively-linked with the driving elements for controlling the manipulation of the magnetic particles within the system.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with regards to the rejection of the claims by Batchelder have been fully considered and are persuasive. This rejection has been withdrawn.

Applicant's arguments with regards to the rejection of the claims by Witt *et al.* have been fully considered and are persuasive. This rejection has been withdrawn.

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Applicant's arguments filed 8/4/2003 regarding the rejection of the claims by Pethig *et al.* have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. The applicant is advised that “[t]he PTO applies to the verbiage of the proposed claims the broadest reasonable meaning of the words in their ordinary usage as they would be understood by one of ordinary skill in the art.” See *In re Morris*, 127 F.3d 1048, 1054, 44 USPQ2d 1023, 1027 (Fed. Cir. 1997). The Courts have held that during patent examination, the pending claims must be interpreted as broadly as their terms reasonably allow. See *In re Zletz*, 893 F.2d 319, 321-22, 13 USPQ2d 1320, 1322 (Fed. Cir. 1989). The Courts have held that, although, the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993). The Courts have held that “[t]he PTO broadly interprets claims during examination of a patent application since the applicant may ‘amend his claim to obtain protection commensurate with his actual contribution to the art.’” See *In re Yamamoto*, 740 F.2d 1569, 1571, 222 USPQ 934, 936 (Fed. Cir. 1984). Furthermore, the Courts have held that apparatus claims must be structurally distinguishable from the prior art in terms of structure, not function. See *In re Danley*, 120 USPQ 528, 531 (CCPA 1959); and *Hewlett-Packard Co. V. Bausch and Lomb, Inc.*, 15 USPQ2d 1525, 1528 (Fed. Cir. 1990) (see MPEP § 2114). The structure of the prior art apparatus, as taught by Pethig *et al.*, appears to coincide with the structural limitations of the claimed apparatus. Although the apparatus, as taught by Pethig *et al.*, may not be what the applicant intends as their own claimed invention, the claims do not exclude the apparatus of Pethig *et al.*

Conclusion


THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brian J. Sines, Ph.D. whose telephone number is (703) 305-0401. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday (11:30 AM - 8 PM EST).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill A. Warden can be reached on (703) 308-4037. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.


Jill Warden
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 1700